



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



KROUPA RETIRES AFTER ASSISTING VETERANS FOR 34 YEARS

Patricia Kroupa, Minnehaha County Veterans Service Officer, recently announced her retirement. Kroupa has served as the Minnehaha County since 1983.

Friends, family, veterans, and co-workers gathered in Sioux Falls Tuesday, to honor Pat and to say "thank you" for all that she has done for South Dakota's veterans and their families.

In 2010, Patricia was presented the SDDVA "Les Mord Award" by her peers and was recognized for her work in guiding veterans in utilizing their educational benefits.

In 2013, Patricia was presented the SDDVA "Jim Melgaard Award" as the outstanding CTVSO of the year.

SDDVA Program Manager's Erin Brown and Heather Bullerman and Field Officer Michael Maske, attended Kroupa's retirement party and thanked her for her service to South Dakota's veterans.

"With 34 years of service, Pat Kroupa has dedicated a lot of time and energy to secure benefits for veterans of Minnehaha County," said Heather Bullerman, SDDVA Program Manager. "Her numerous recognitions demonstrate the support she had from her coworkers, SDDVA, and VA employees," said Bullerman. "We will miss her friendship and her flawless claims that she submitted.

David Sorensen has been selected to fill the VSO position in Minnehaha County.



Inside this issue:

Flu Season Hits SD	2
Locken Announces Retirement	2
USS South Dakota	3
SD American Legion Mid-Winter Conference	4
ESGR Award	5
Lewison Joins SDDVA Team	5
General Logan Returns to State Veterans Home	6
Upcoming Events	7

FLU SEASON HAS HIT THE DAKOTAS

As the flu travels across the state, please remember that veterans can obtain flu shots free at their local VA Medical Center or Community Based Outpatient Clinic.

The VA has also teamed up with Walgreens Pharmacies nationwide to allow all veterans who are currently enrolled in the VA healthcare system to walk into any of the over 8,000 Walgreens nationally to receive a vaccination *at no cost*. Vaccinations are available through March 31, 2017. Veterans wishing to receive the no cost vaccination at Walgreens simply need to present a Veterans Identification Card and a photo ID.

In addition, after the Walgreens pharmacist administers the vaccine, Walgreens will transmit that information securely to the VA where it becomes part of the patient's electronic medical record.



LOCKEN ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Lawrence County Veterans Service Officer Bill Locken has given notice to his commissioners that he will be retiring effective June 22, 2017. Locken has been the Lawrence county VSO since 1996.

Locken grew up in Fulton and graduated from South Dakota State University with a degree in electrical engineering.

Locken retired from the Air Force in 1994 and served his country for a little more than two decades.

Bill served on the South Dakota Veterans Commission from 2001-2013.

Watch for details on his retirement party!!!!



SAVE THE DATES FOR THE USS SOUTH DAKOTA

Summer 2017 – Christening – The sub will officially be christened the USS SOUTH DAKOTA. The ship's sponsor, Mrs. Dempsey, will bestow the ship's name while smashing a bottle of champagne on the bow.

August 2018 – Commissioning – The PCU SOUTH DAKOTA will be commissioned for service and officially become the USS SOUTH DAKOTA (SSN 790). In an important Naval ceremony, the United States Navy accepts the submarine, which then officially becomes a part of the active Navy Fleet. Mrs. Dempsey, the ship's sponsor, will proclaim, "Man our ship and bring her to life" upon which time the crew boards the ship.



LEWISON JOINS SDDVA TEAM

Joe Lewison has joined the SDDVA team and will serve as a state veterans service officer in our Claims Office.

Joe is originally from Hawarden, Iowa. He moved to Sioux Falls in 2000 where he met his wife Suzy and they were married in 2002.

Joe left for the Navy in 2009 and served till 2014. He was a corpsman in the Navy with a specialty in pharmacy.

Joe recently graduated from South Dakota State University with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and a minor in Business Administration.

Joe and Suzy have two children and recently bought their first home in Sioux Falls.



AMERICAN LEGION HOLDS ANNUAL MIDWINTER CONFERENCE

This past weekend American Legion members from throughout the state gathered in Oacoma for the American Legion Mid-Winter Conference.

Reports were presented by Adjutant Denny Brendan, State Commander Charmon Dunham, Auxiliary President Melanie Martens, SAL Detachment Commander Jeff Shannon, National Vice Commander Douglas Boldt, as well as numerous post and auxiliary committee chairs.

SDDVA's Program Manager Heather Bullerman attended the conference on behalf of the Department and gave an update on department activities as well as the status of legislative session. After her presentation, Bullerman had the opportunity to meet with many American Legion members. "It is really a great experience to be able to meet with our American Legion partners one on one and discuss their great ideas to make veteran's, as well as their families, lives better," said Bullerman.

Hugh Holmes presented Bullerman with a framed and matted print of the American Legion's "Brothers and Sisters Forever" print for the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home.

The American Legion State Convention will be held at the Watertown Events Center June 15-18, 2017.



U.S. BUREAU OF RECLAMATION HONORED FOR PATRIOTIC SUPPORT

South Dakota Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense program, announced Jay Leasure with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in Rapid City was honored with a Patriot Award in recognition of extraordinary support of his service member employee.

The Patriot Award, created by ESGR, publicly recognizes individuals who provide outstanding patriotic support and cooperation to their employees, who, like the citizen warriors before them, have answered their nation's call to serve.

Leasure was nominated for being highly supportive of his employee, Capt. William Domagall, who serves in the South Dakota Army National Guard's 153rd Engineer Battalion.

Domagall said he nominated Leasure for the award because he truly cares about veterans and taking care of deployed soldiers.

ESGR facilitates and promotes a cooperative culture of employer support for National Guard and Reserve service by developing and advocating mutually beneficial initiatives, recognizing outstanding employer support, increasing awareness of applicable laws and policies, resolving potential conflicts between employers and their service members, and acting as the employers' principal advocate within DoD.



Jay Leasure accepts Patriot Award from Francie Ruebel-Alberts, SD ESGR.

VA AWARDS THREE UNIVERSITY CONTRACTS PROMOTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH NATIONAL CEMETERIES

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has awarded three university contracts to research and share local history through the diversity of veterans' experience found in VA national cemeteries, officials.

NCA awarded three separate contracts to San Francisco State University, Black Hills State University and University of Central Florida to conduct cemetery research and produce educational material for K-12 schools and the general public in an effort to promote community engagement with veterans' history.

The VA awarded a total of \$672,573 to San Francisco State University to develop material related to San Francisco and Golden Gate national cemeteries; Black Hills State University for Black Hills National Cemetery, Sicangu Akicita Owicahé Tribal Veterans Cemetery and Lakota Freedom Tribal Veterans Cemetery; and University of Central Florida for Florida National Cemetery.

The initial contracts are the first of many planned initiatives to engage educators, students, researchers and the general public through NCA's Veterans Legacy Program. For more information, visit: www.cem.va.gov/legacy.

GENERAL LOGAN VISITS STATE VETERANS HOME

Our heroes at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home were gathering for a little Valentine's Day festivities and treats, when who should arrive but General John Logan and his wife Mary.

Tom and Laura Inman (staff at the home) dressed up as the Logan's and presented a little historical story on how the Soldiers Home was created.

General Logan did a great deal to promote the objectives of the Grand Army and is considered to be the guiding spirit of it. He was born in Illinois in 1826 and served as military governor of Vicksburg after its capture by Union forces. He served in the United States Congress from 1866 to 1869.



Arriving on the campus of the State Veterans Home you will see the statue of General Logan located in front of the administration building, overlooking the park. The statue erected on the Soldiers' Home grounds through the efforts of the Memorial Association was carved from buff sandstone which was donated by Fred Evans, at that time mayor of Hot Springs. The statue is six feet two inches in height, and represents the general in the uniform of a Union soldier. His left hand clasps the hilt of his sword, and his head is uncovered.

The Logan statue is symbolic of the close ties which existed between the Grand Army and the Soldiers' Home.

Also on hand to enjoy this historical debut, were airmen from Ellsworth Air Force base. They shared their Valentine's Day honoring and thanking our veterans for their service.

Special thanks to Tom and Laura Inman for taking our heroes back in history.



Upcoming Events

- Feb. 23—"I Spy Patriotism" Photography Exhibition—USD Muenster Center—Ballroom C—Vermillion—9:00 am—1:00 pm (CT)
Feb. 28—SFVAHCS Open House of New Primary Care addition with Veterans Benefits Fair from 4:00 pm—6:00 pm (CT)
Mar. 1—SFVAHCS Creative Arts Festival—Sioux Falls VA Medical Center 2:00 pm (CT)
Mar. 29—"Clay County's Fallen" Research Contest—USD School of Education—Room 118—Vermillion—5:00-8:00 pm (CT)
Apr. 13—SFVAHCS Veterans Town Hall—Dakota Playhouse—DSU Campus—Madison—5:00 pm (CT) with Benefits Fair at 4:00 pm (CT)
Apr. 19—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
Apr 28-30—DAV Annual Convention—AmericInn—Fort Pierre
Jun 15-18—SD American Legion State Conference—Watertown
Jun 22-25—State VFW Convention—Pierre
Aug. 14-17—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Pierre—Ramkota



In honor of Presidents Day, all state offices will be closed on Monday, February 20.

Here's
What's
Happening!

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military <http://military.sd.gov>
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>
Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242
E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us

